



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: November 6, 2000 **Contact:** Tiffani Clements (202) 205-6740

Release Number: 00-98

Internet Address: www.sba.gov/news/indexheadline.html

SBA AND GSA JOIN FORCES TO PROMOTE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN THE GAS INDUSTRY

WASHINGTON – The General Services Administration (GSA) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) have teamed up on a procurement strategy to deliver a \$1 billion multiple award federal contract over 10 years to small disadvantaged firms in the natural gas utilities business.

The companies – all participants in the SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program – will be chosen through the competitive selection process to distribute natural gas to the federal government. This initiative is a joint effort by the SBA and GSA to encourage more business and contracting opportunities for 8(a) businesses in the natural gas industry.

"This initiative was put in place to promote prosperity in an industry with limited participation by disadvantaged businesses. It will create jobs and provide more contracting opportunities," said SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez.

"It is one of the largest procurements ever in the 31 years of the 8(a) Program's existence and just one of SBA's outreach efforts designed to assist small disadvantaged businesses with financial and technical assistance and contracting opportunities."

The SBA and GSA collaborated on this project for several months before GSA submitted the gas utilities services project to the SBA for approval. For more than a decade, the GSA's National Center for Utilities Management has been committed to providing federal agencies with energy resources in the most cost effective manner possible, and developing innovative solutions in a constantly changing utilities industry.

The SBA's Office of Business Development helps socially and economically disadvantaged businesses compete for federal contracts and provides management and technical assistance to program participants. It is constantly developing business strategies and conducting outreach efforts to market the 8(a) program to new procuring arenas. There are currently more than 6,000 firms enrolled in the 8(a) Program.

For more information on all of SBA's programs for small businesses, call the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800-U ASK SBA, or visit the SBA's extensive Web site at www.sba.gov.

###